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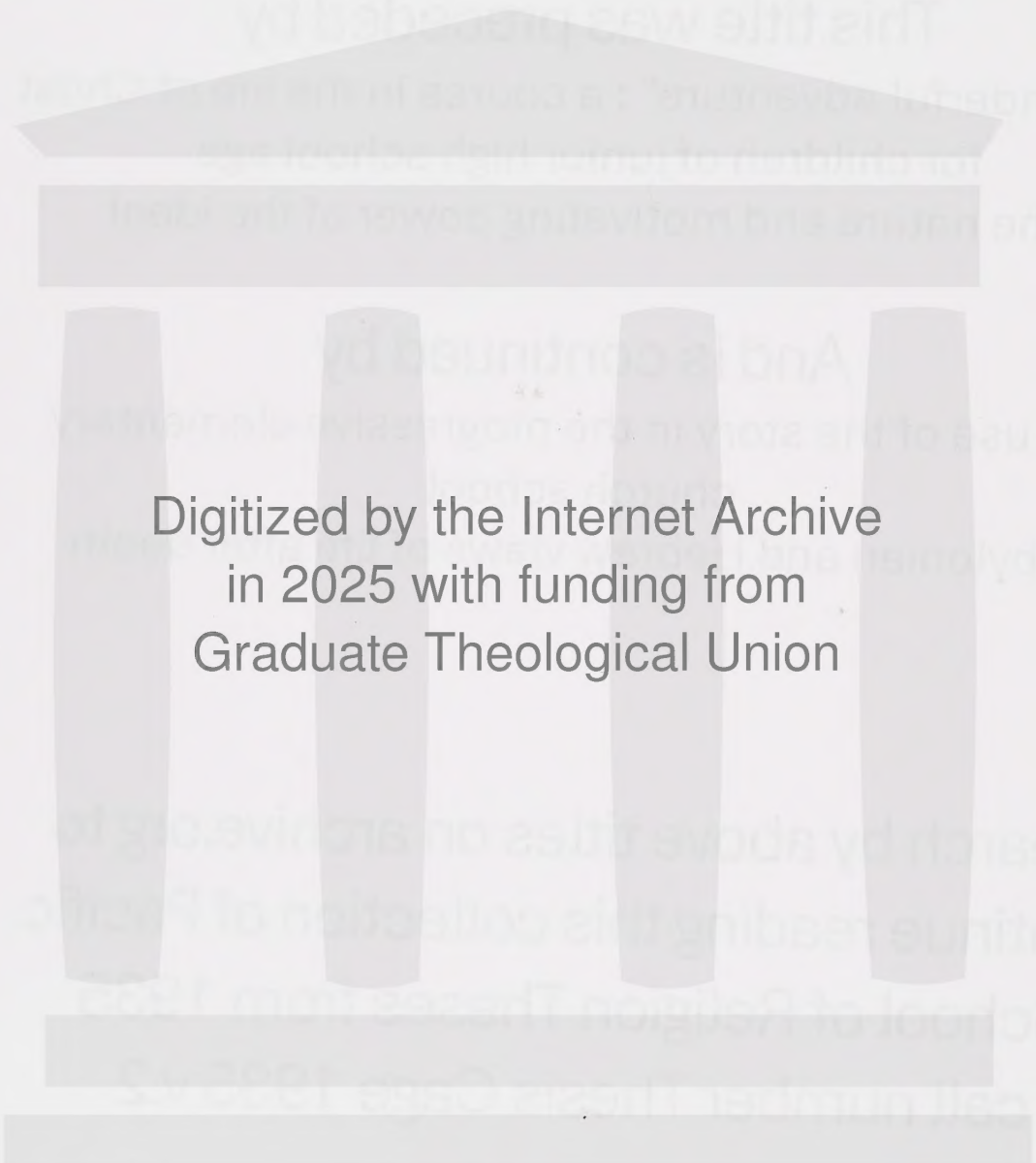

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THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF SAINT PAUL

by

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Montgomery, Alabama, 1931

Thesis, submitted in the Department of New Testament Literature and Interpretation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Pacific School of Religion.

1935

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INTRODUCTION

Saint Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, was one of the most potent forces in the institutional development of the early Christian Church. Because of his broad background--social, religious, etc.--and his keen understanding and appreciation of the problems that perplexed the world of his day; the remarkable letters which he composed for church organizations and close friends, give insight into conditions as then existing and his proposals for meeting those conditions.

The purpose of this study is to consider Saint Paul's reaction to the social problems that confronted the people of his day, and his suggestions as to how those people might solve their problems to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

The great task that confronted Saint Paul was that of applying the gospel precepts to conditions that Jesus never contemplated. With an insight almost unequalled, he seizes the inner principles presented in the gospels and shows how they are valid, not merely for peasant life, but for the complex civilization of a great city. "He found the church a small Jewish community, with crude Messianic conceptions; he left it a world organization in which there was neither Jew nor Gentile. He sublimated the simple faith and hope in Jesus as the Messiah of Judaism into a worship of Him as the Son of God, in whom dwelt the fullness of the godhead."[1]

It was all-important that Christianity in its infancy had such a man as Paul as its representative, who by his self-sacrifice, his passion for all that was highest, his sympathy for

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1. Foakes-Jackson, Life of Saint Paul, p. 15

the poor and the weak, his incomparable qualities of mind and heart, made real to the world the message of Jesus.[1] Paul was by far the greatest of the missionaries, and was peculiarly fitted for the task of interpreting Christianity to the Gentiles. He was a Jew of the Dispersion, trained in the rabbinical schools, and still more, was acquainted from childhood with Gentile ideas.[2]

In Saint Paul's ethical teachings we most clearly perceive his essential agreement with Jesus. The profoundly Christian character of his ethics is unmistakable. The manifold directions which he gives his converts are all conceived in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Nowhere in his morality can we detect anything that is at variance with the principles of Jesus. He had a deep insight into the inner meaning of the message of Jesus. While expressing it in new form, it might often appear foreign in its nature. Paul was always able in a wonderful way to preserve it, and bring out more clearly than ever the truth at the heart of it.[3]

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1. Scott, E. F., First age of Christianity, p. 145
2. Ibid., p. 158
3. Ibid., p. 157

I

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

(1) Birthplace. Situated on the River Cydnus, in the fertile Cilician Plain, about twelve miles from the sea, was the city called Tarsus. It was an important center with an illustrious history. In 22 B. C. Augustus granted the city its freedom and gave it the title of metropolis. Tarsus by virtue of this title was granted the right to issue its own coin upon which was written the word "metropolis". It was a self-governed city and paid no tribute to the Roman overlord.

Because of its location midway between the East and the West, Tarsus was the transition point for travel on both land and sea. Its nearness to the Cilician Gate made it the stopping place for commerce and culture which flowed in both directions through the Tarus Mountains.

Aside from being a cosmopolitan and industrial center, Tarsus was also a university center; a center of Greek culture. Many writers of antiquity ranked it above Athens and Alexandria as a center of philosophy. The Tarsians had a great enthusiasm for philosophy and education in general, and combined the philosophy of Greek with the Oriental mysticism. In this frontier community the two great languages of the Near East met.

Tarsus was a place for a great variety of amusements; there were theaters, gymnasiums, and shops of all descriptions. In its streets could be seen slaves and soldiers in large numbers. The workers in sailscloth had a repute for being many in number and disorderly in ways.[1]

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1. Glover, T. R., Paul of Tarsus, p. 6

Tarsus was peculiarly successful in producing an amalgamated society in which the oriental and occidental spirit in unison attained in some degree to a higher plane of thought and action.

It was into this environment that Saul, later to be called Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was born. He was a Jew by heredity, a Roman by citizensnip, and a Greek by environment.[1] With this triple advantage, Paul proclaims in his second letter to the Corinthians, "If any Jewish teacher had cause to boast of his unblemished descent, he had. Are they Hebrew? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they of the race of Abraham? So am I."(11:22) In his letter to the Philippians, he says that he is an Israelite by race, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew, born of Hebrew stock; belonged to the legal party of Pharisees, was circumcised on the eighth day, and was irreproachable as an observer of the law.(3:4-5) Few could claim the distinction of having been born a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Not only was Paul free--many Jews bought their freedom--but he was born of free parents, who were Roman citizens.

While Saint Paul's heredity added much to his poise and dignity as a Jew, and his Greek environment did much to train him to meet people of all races and classes, his Roman citizenship proved in many instances to be the most valuable asset in helping him out of various difficulties.

Paul's heritage and training were equalled by that of no other apostle of his age. No one of the Galilean peasants in

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1. Hayes, D. A., Paul and his epistles, p. 22

the early apostolic company had such training and background, and no one of them was prepared as was Paul to meet all classes and nationalities with confidence and pause, and with such a gift of winning them to Christ.

Saint Paul's Roman citizenship meant much to him as a traveler and missionary. Whenever the occasion demanded, he always made the most of it. Many times it saved him from persecution and at times when his life would have been otherwise at stake, through his civil rights as a citizen, he demanded his release. There were three chief privileges of a Roman citizen:trial by a Roman court; freedom from dishonorable punishment(scourging and crucifixion); and the right of appeal to Caesar with certain limitations. At Philippi Paul forced the Praetors to confess that they had acted illegally in imprisoning Roman citizens who were uncondemned. When the chief captain of Jerusalem, thinking Paul to be only an ordinary Jew, would have subjected him to torture in order to obtain a confession of some wrong doing, he secures release on the grounds of his Roman citizenship.(Acts 22:25) It was as a citizen that he pleaded his own case before Felix and Festus, and insisted upon his right to appeal his case from their jurisdiction to that of the court of the emperor.(Acts 25:11)

(2) Paul's training. As a Jewish boy of Tarsus, Paul no doubt went to school at the Jewish synagogue. The language instruction was Greek, and the Greek version of the scriptures was his Bible. He would also learn to read the Old Testament in Hebrew.[1] During Paul's boyhood, he also learned the tent-

1. Robertson, A. T., Epochs in the life of Paul, p. 29

making trade; as every Jewish boy was taught a trade of some kind.

At the age of 16 or older, Paul went to study under Gamaliel, a man well fitted to develop just such a mind as that possessed by Paul. They had many points in common. Gamaliel combined a tendency to broad-mindedness with an unflinching courage of conviction. He was more tolerant than most of his contemporaries. The Jews as a race, were intolerant, exclusive, and proud. "Cursed be ye that eats pork and teaches his sons the Greek wisdom," was one of their favorite proverbs. The law was all-sufficient for them. Gamaliel defied this popular prejudice, as Paul later defied the law. He began to teach Jewish boys in the wisdom of the Greeks. The great teacher, as we find Paul doing later, dealt sharply with his opponents, could never be vanquished in any argument, nor would he change his opinion. Perhaps such a personality did do something to encourage Paul to act according to his own convictions.

As to whether Saint Paul's training went beyond this is a question in the minds of many scholars. While some hold that he ranked among the intellectuals, others fail to place him in this category. Cone[1], Deissmann[2], and Andrews[3] think that Paul shows no evidence of having been a scholar. His Greek, his style and manner of reasoning were unlike that of a Greek scholar.

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1. Cone, O. D., St. Paul, the man, the missionary, and the teacher
2. Deissmann, A., St. Paul:a study in social religious history
3. Andrews, M. E.,The ethical teachings of Paul

(3) Personality of Paul. Professor Deissmann says that it is the suggestive power of Paul's trustful and brotherly personality that bound people to him. It is thought by some students of Paul that his personality was the greatest of all his gifts to Christianity. One will only have to read the second letter to the Corinthians to see the real heart of the writer. His utter self-forgetfulness and love for his converts is obvious. It was such a personality that did so much to uplift lowly hearts, and bring them to Christianity.

Saint Paul's human greatness is revealed by the great contradictions in his nature. Deissmann says that he had room in his personality for opposing principles that would have shattered a small man, but which set up in him a tension which found an outlet in the energy he expended in his life's work. While Professor Scott says that Paul was free from petty jealousies and kindred vices of small nature, and makes much of his personality,[1] Miss Andrews, nevertheless, thinks that there were many flaws to be found in it. However, she is of the opinion that it was Paul's personality that created many of his difficulties.[2] In his own eyes, Paul was always right, and those who opposed him were always wrong.

The cultural and educational advantages of a cosmopolitan city; the resultant acquaintance with Gentiles; the certain sense of pride and self-confidence afforded by family heritage and Roman citizenship; his training in the rabbinical school, and the missionary atmosphere to be found among the zealous

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1. Scott, op. cit., pp. 145ff.
2. Andrews, op. cit., pp. 167ff.

Diaspora Jews, peculiarly fitted Paul--as no other was fitted--for the task of interpreting Christianity to the Gentile world.

A more detailed study will be made of the influence exerted on Saint Paul by ideas from Judaism, Stoicism, and the mystery cults.

(4) Judaism. While Judaism was not the only determining factor, it seems to the writer that aside from the necessity of the social situation, Judaism as a whole did more than any other factor in determining Paul's behavior.

To the Jew, ethics and religion were inseparable. The golden rule, at least in its negative form, was taught as early as Hillel. Hillel taught the Jews never to do anything to his fellow-man that he would hate to have his fellow-man do to him.

Professor Enslin says that, simply because Paul broke with the law and rejected Judaism to a great extent, it cannot be said that his every action was not influenced by it. He could come to deny every precept of Judaism; could distort it and paint it in colors that no Jew would accept, yet it had laid hold on him, had molded his thoughts in plastic days, and pre-determined in no small measure, his whole outlook on life. "He might feel that Judaism had been false to the ideals of the Old Testament, yet the point remains that precisely the ideals, which Paul comes to believe were realized only in the Christian, and were demanded by the union with Christ, rather than through the command of the law, were held by the Jews also."[1]

In the realm of morals, it was Jewish ideals that molded Saint Paul's thoughts. Years later he might reject the whole

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1. Enslin, M. S., The ethics of Paul, pp. 144ff.

Jewish system as evil, yet his outlook on life, his reaction to conditions, and his way of thinking bear significant testimony to the influence which the sturdy Jewish morality exerted in the formative days of the lad of Tarsus.

While Enslin admits a very definite break with Judaism, he believes that many colorful years had lapsed between Saul's conversion and the appearance of the Paul that we know from the epistles. This break with the law, he believes, and the rise of his own peculiar and highly developed system of beliefs were the product of many unfolding experiences. Enslin disagrees with T. C. Hall in his theory that Paul failed to find peace and exact fulfillment in legal reprisals, and suddenly saw God in Jesus Christ, no longer as a stern law-giver, but as a redeeming Father, and hence entered upon this freedom of loving Son-ship; but rather believes that the alienation, that increased until Paul could break as completely as he seems to do in the third chapter of Philippians, was brought about in no small measure by opposition from his fellow-countrymen, with whom he had been in constant conflict. Dr. Cone says that whatever culture Paul had was that of a Hebrew, who had dilligently studied the literature of his own people. He thought in Hebrew, expressed himself in Hebrew idioms, and his writings betray throughout the absence of the breadth and refinement of a cosmopolitan literary training.

Miss Andrews says, "In making a survey of Paul's letters in an effort to evaluate the Jewish element, certain things stand out. In his intellectual formation, there is a large

element of Jewish content. His idea of Jesus' resurrection is Jewish, the return of Jesus in connection with the Judgment Day is also Jewish, and when he speaks of God, he means the God of the Jews. The supremacy of God runs all through his epistles, and while Jesus is Lord of the cult, he never displaces God. His conception of justice and mercy as the two main attributes of God is decidedly Jewish. His use of the Scriptures is that of the Hellenistic Jew."[1]

Professor Deissmann says that Paul is thoroughly Jewish. "He remained a Jew even when a Christian. From the Jews he learned to worship God. Though he stood above the letter of the law, he still observed the hallowed customs of his fathers. It was from his Jewish observants that he learned to appreciate the conception of the prophets concerning circumcision of the heart. It was the influence of Judaism that made him feel disposed to give his body to be burned, even at the hands of Judaism itself."[2]

While all leading scholars agree that Judaism influenced Paul's behavior to an incalculable degree, some hold that it was the only influence that played a definite part in shaping his fundamental purpose or motive. There are many others, however, who think that there were many influences.

To what extent did Paul's Jewish heritage influence his social and religious behavior?

Judaism of the Diaspora, down to the second Christian century, was possessed with a glowing zeal to convert the heathen

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1. Andrews, op. cit., p. 142
2. Deissmann, op. cit.,

world to the higher monotheistic religion. This zeal is decidedly possessed by Saint Paul. Israel thought that she was chosen to be the priestly nation for the whole world. It was the opinion of Philo that the Jewish people, above all others, were beloved of God and had secured the priesthood for the human race. And to the same extent that Israel thought that she was called by God to be the priestly nation for the Gentile world, Paul also thought that he was ordained by Jesus Christ to be the Apostle to the Gentile world.

This attitude on the part of the Jews of the Diaspora played no small part in preparing the way for Paul. It also influenced him to remove the barriers that kept Jews and Gentiles apart. Such an environment led Paul to go many steps farther and abolish all artificial distinctions regarding the religious status, and to enunciate a universalism which could form the foundation principle of a world religion.

Although this attitude on the part of the Diaspora Jews was considered liberal in the light of the orthodox Jews, it did not go far enough. While their goal was to establish a world religion, they lacked the essential element which was to be found in Paul. They lacked the Messiah who superseded the significance of Temple and Cultus, who abolished the burden of pharisaic ordinances, and lightened the yoke of the Mosaic law for the Gentiles. Paul's inspired intuition, together with the essential element lacking in Judaism, enabled Christianity to reap the harvest so nobly sown by the missionary zeal of Hellenistic Judaism.[1]

Paul's missionary zeal was his heritage from Judaism. So

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1. Abingdon's Commentary, p. 848

also was his idea of God, his eschatology, and his belief in a physical ressurrection.

Saint Paul's conception of God was his inalienable heritage from Judaism. To the Jew, God was a unique and holy Being, supreme and transcendent; the Creator and Ruler of the world, whose majesty could not be shared.[1] The Jewish belief that the essential attributes of God were love, justice, and mercy, played no small part in Paul's social and religious teachings.

Paul's eschatology, and his teachings, in so far as they were colored by it, were decidedly that found in Judaism. The belief that there would be a sweeping away of the present order, and the incoming of divine judgment that would rectify all wrong, was no doubt the belief of every Jewish boy.

Paul only taught the early Christians that which had been taught to him by his Jewish forefathers concerning the ressurrection of the body.

(5) Stoic influences. A comparison of Jewish ethics with that of the Stoics will show very striking similarities. The Stoics considered ethics the noblest type of philosophy. As a result of social experience, their main concern was with moral and religions problems. The great Stoic philosopher, Posidonius, is said to have given new direction to Stoicism, and, through the medium of Philo, influenced to some extent Christian literature. The philosophy of Tarsus was stamped by that of Posidonius.

Pfleiderer points out that Pauline and Stoic ethics agree on three essential points :(1)freedom from the world, (2)con-

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1. Abingdon's, op. cit., pp. 581ff.

quest of sensuality, and (3)brotherly love. In spite of the similarity and points in common, he does not think that Paul knew the ideas of Seneca. While Paul's epistles contained a remarkable coincidence of thought and speech with that of Seneca, it points not to Seneca himself, but to a common source which is to be found in the culture of that period--a period which was saturated with Stoic thought. This influence was strongly exercised upon the Jewish Dispersion in Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt.[1]

Dr. Cone is of the opinion that Greek influence was comparatively small. Paul's knowledge of Greek was not acquired in the schools, but picked up by him from living in a community in which it was spoken, and from Greek translations of the Old Testament.[2]

Professor Andrews says that from extant literary remains of Roman Stoicism, Paul does not at all link up with the philosophy of the Stoics, and there is no sign of his having been schooled in the philosophy of his day. The influence is indirect, and Paul is only influenced in so far as Stoicism influenced Judaism.[3]

Deissman writes that Paul did not belong to the literary class at all. The literary men of his day took no notice of him on the whole, and when he does come in contact with them,as with the Athenian philosophers, he is put off with worldly-wise phrases, or is regarded by them as being ridiculous. Paul, himself, felt the distance that separated him from the men of letters.[4]

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1. Pfleiderer, O., Christian origins, pp. 79, 157
2. Cone, op. cit., p. 4
3. Andrews, op. cit., p. 167
4. Deissmann, op. cit., p

While Professor Enslin agrees with many others in his belief that Paul's mode of expression was influenced by the Stoics, he does not believe, as do others, that his phrases were so affected.[1]

On the other hand, Professor Bartlet does not believe that Paul's thought was influenced by the Stoics, he does believe that his phrases were. "In expounding his thoughts to converts, he was wont to use a terminology rather different from his own in its association and shades of meaning, Paul, with the tact of a great missionary adopted certain words and phrases current among those to whom he wrote."[2]

Deissmann points out that in many museums, specimens of counters used in ancient games will be found that throw light on the terms which Paul used for vices and virtues. On one side of the counter is a number and on the other side is a word addressed to a person in such form as "Art thou glad", or "Thou will scarcely laugh." These counters also carry a large number of popular names of vices and virtues which bear out the idea of the Hellenistic influence. A comparison of the list found on these counters with the list of names of vices and virtues found in the letters of Saint Paul will to an extent show how far the language of the Stoics made its way into the language of the Hellenistic Jew.[3]

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1. Enslin, op. cit., p. 41
2. Article by J. V. Bartlet, Abingdon's, op. cit., p. 941
3. Note I Corinthians, 6:9,10, for such words as fornicators, adulterers, extortioners, revilers; also virtue, diligence and faith. All these words are found parallel in the pagan list.(Deissmann, A., Light from the ancient East, pp. 319-22)

"The Stoic missionary, preaching the self-sufficiency of virtue in a threadbare cloak at the street corners, had been one of the typical figures of the Greek town for many generations before Paul."[1]

Just as the above mentioned street preacher created a method of preaching for the people of his day, so did he and others of his class leaven the moral vocabulary of the Greek and Roman world, by creating a new set of ethical terms. While Paul adopted the Stoic terms, he nevertheless invested them with entirely new content and values. The language is charged with a new meaning.[2]

(6) Paul and the mystery cults. While the mystery cults were prevalent in Paul's day, many of the outstanding students of Paul do not believe that the Apostle was influenced by them. The thought of Paul and the thought of the mysteries moved in two different worlds.[3]

Paul's mysticism is thoroughly ethical. The mystic death to sin of which he speaks is wholly different in conception from the mystical identification of the initiate in the mystery cult with the death of the divine personage, whose restoration to life was celebrated and depicted in the mystery ceremonial.[4]

While Saint Paul uses the terminology of the mysteries just as he does that of the Stoics, in both cases he gives the language new meaning. Behind Paul's language is a fundamentally different conception of God. Whatever use he made of the technical or philosophical terms, he never compromised his central conception of God.

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1. Doran, Hellenism and Christianity, pp. 72-73
2. Box, C. G., Article in Abingdon's, op. cit., p. 851
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

(7) Other influencing factors. While it cannot be denied that there is a distinct Jewish influence and some traces of Stoic influences--whether direct or indirect--to be found in Paul's reactions, it must be understood that his ethical judgments were more conditioned by the contemporary social situations than by any heritage from the past. "His social experience was the major factor in determining his ethical judgment. Many of his problems could not be settled by an appeal to the past. Many times he had to compromise. He had to appeal to whatever incentive to more worthy living he could find. As immediate judgment on ethical matters was conditioned by the necessity of circumstances, so also was the presence of collections of ethical precepts in his letters motivated by the needs of his community."[1]

A study of Paul's temperament also thrown much light on his ethical outlook. His conviction that the end of the world was near did more to shape his judgment on marriage than did his Jewish heritage. Dr. Andrews finds in Paul's writings evidence of emotional instability. The fact that he was a rugged individualist, insisting upon dominating things, his abmormal capacity for hardships, and readiness for martyrdom seem to evidence that he was temperamentally unsuited for satisfying religious experience within Judaism. His emotional temperament did not thrive on the practices of an attainment religion with its emphasis on the group, rather than upon the individual. The fact that Paul willingly persecuted Christians is evidence of his abnormality. His complete change from Judaism and the law and various other actions must be seen in the light of his temperament.[2]

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1. Andrews, op. cit., p. 173
2. Ibid., p. 142

With no attempt to minimize the Jewish, Stoic, and eschatological influences upon Paul's behavior, the factor that was ultimately the determining one was his social experience. The social conditions and immediate needs of his communities always conditioned his immediate judgment. There were times when appeal to Judaism, Stoicism, or any heritage of the past would not give relief to the situation. Whatever part Paul's temperament might have played in determining his judgment in some cases, he never let his temperament, nor ever his eschatology, blind him to the urgent social needs of the moment.

II

PAUL AND THE GENTILE WORLD

It shall be the purpose of this chapter to study the social teachings of Saint Paul in the light of the social conditions with which he was confronted. As Professor Mathews says, the problem of understanding Paul is quite as much an historical one as an exegetical one, and any complete presentation of the apostolic thought must rest not upon detached teachings, but upon a careful estimate of such teachings in the light both of apostolic Messianism and the social environment of those to they were addressed.[1]

Along with Mathews, many others, especially those identified with the Chicago School of Thought, are stressing the importance of the line of social approach.

One may well realize the validity of the statement made by the above mentioned author when an attempt is made to reconcile one statement of Paul on a particular subject at one time to another statement on the same subject at another time. If both statements are not read in the light of their apostolic Messianism as well as in the light of their social environment, they will certainly seem inconsistent, if not contradictory. A good example of this is a comparison of Paul's discourse on marriage in I Corinthians 7 with that in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5.

The first discourse will have to be understood from an entirely different angle from the latter two. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul has been asked certain questions by his congregation concerning marriage. From his answer, it seems

1. Mathews, S., "Social teachings of St. Paul",(In Biblical world XIX, 436)

that the question has been asked as to which was the more ideal state, the married or the unmarried. Uppermost in Paul's mind as well as in the minds of his converts is the idea that the end of the world is close at hand. With a catastrophic end approaching he does not think that it is wise to contract ties that would further burden one with worldly cares. He thinks that by remaining unmarried, one is free to devote all his time and energy to the preparation for the coming of the kingdom. In the light of these facts, Paul sets forth his views on the problem of marriage. He is not in this instance in a normal way dealing with a normal situation; hence we are to find advice for our modern social problems, not in this passage, but in those found in the third chapter of Colossians and the fifth chapter of Ephesians, where Paul's views are not colored by his eschatology, but where they are normally expressed in normal situations.

In the case of the letters to the churches at Colosse and Ephesus, we find different conditions motivating what Paul has to say. He is no longer teaching in the light of another world, but in the light of actual social conditions, in the midst of which his members were forced to live. It was not a question of which was better, the married or the unmarried state, but one of trying to make the best of the state in which they already were. Because of the lax moral conditions which were undermining the very structure of society, with the consequent danger to the family, Paul avails himself of the opportunity to point out to those already married just how they should conduct themselves. It is when he is faced with such a situation that he sets forth the most lofty views on marriage. The foregoing two

views taken in any way other than in their immediate setting will not be understood.

When Saint Paul admonishes people to be content in whatever state they find themselves, it is not to be interpreted in the light of modern ideas. He is speaking to a group that is infested with social unrest. While their present situation is not to be desired, Paul knows that complaint and discontentment will not help matters. He also realizes the danger that might arise from a small group growing restless to the extent of trying to revolutionize things. There were many classes to which Paul spoke. He was speaking to slaves who wanted to be free; to servants who wanted to be masters; and to many who wanted to be in any state save the one in which they found thenselves. I do not think that any one could accuse Paul of approving slavery, or of believing that every slave should want to continue as a slave. He did realize the futility of slaves trying to free themselves in a State in which slavery was considered the foundation of the economic society. He expected the end when all the evils should be done away; when there should be neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, slave nor master, bond nor free. Paul's teaching concerned the Church and its members, and not society at large. Such evils as class conflict, political entanglements, slavery, etc., were considered an abiding element in a wicked world, which would not stand in the new order of things, soon to be ushered in, not by the efforts of men, but by the power of God. The standards of the kingdom were to be found in the other world, not in this one.

Saint Paul is concerned with telling men what is required of them to enter a new world, rather than with transforming the old one. Throughout, his morality is on the basis of human relationship. He demands unselfish love toward one's fellowmen, and a fit moral state for the coming kingdom. Paul is not endeavoring to reform society or to set up a moral code for all times and conditions, but is simply trying to point out a way of conduct for men and women in the midst of an unstable society.

While Paul's ethical teachings have been the battleground for theological disputations, Professor Mathews says that circumstances forced him to develop the theological content of the Messianic faith, and the necessity of actually living in accordance with such a faith led him to point out the ethical and social principles involved.[1]

Social conditions (1) Position of women. There was a shocking irregularity in the relations between the sexes. While both the Jewish and Roman women were subordinated to the men, the Greek woman's lot was even worse. Although the Greeks were believers in monogamy, wives were never held in esteem. Demosthenes says, "We have hetairai for our pleasure, concubines for the ordinary requirements of the body, and wives for the procreation of lawful issue, and as confidential domestic guardians." These hetairai were women of culture and refinement who could talk intelligently upon art and politics, sing and entertain. The Greek wife was ignorant, modest, and simple. The men cared little for home life, and preferred the company of this class of entertaining women and other men to their wives.

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1. Mathews, op. cit., p. 435

The wife lived in seclusion; a life free from temptation; and protected by public opinion. But for the husband, all sorts of provisions were made for their irregular passions. Thucydides was reported to have said that he considered that wife best who was least spoken of either for her vices or virtues by men. Fidelity and obedience with indulgence for men's infidelity were considered their chief virtues.

While the Roman wife was as much in her husband's power as the Greek, her position was much better. She was always his companion, and could preside at his table. All the sanctities of religion were thrown around the Roman marriage.

While even among the ancient Israelites, women had early attained a high position in the tribe or family because of the distinguished part that women had played in securing Israel's freedom at various times, yet in the Rabbinic theology there is no doubt that women were considered inferior. The Jewish wife was expected to "look well to the ways of her household." She was to be a domestic, and above all live up the established rules of conduct. The idea of secluding the wife from public affairs was an established one.[1]

(2) Social upheaval among the women. Let us here consider the social upheaval among women, and how this might have determined what Paul had to say concerning their proper conduct in public.

Women during the time of Paul were making a terrific struggle for freedom. The religion or cult that seemed to have offered them a new freedom in the slightest held for them quite an attraction. The religion of Cybele, Isis, and Dionysus,

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1. Foakes-Jackson, op. cit., p.

placed quite an emphasis upon the freedom of women. It would seem that the women were more in search of freedom than religion. In this "mad search" for freedom women were neglecting homes, husbands, and children, and in many cases abandoning all forms of decent conventions with the notion of proclaiming themselves free. Christian women in many instances were no less guilty. They were eager to stage any show that displayed their freedom in the Lord. The tendency was to carry the principle of Christian liberty quite too far. They wanted to discard their veils and prophecy in public like men. They conducted themselves in ways that were far out of keeping with their times. It was such conduct on the part of Christian women that brought the new religion into disrepute. And it is in the light of such a false interpretation of Christian liberty that Saint Paul tells women how they should conduct themselves in public worship. This point, however, will be discussed later.

(3) Children in the Gentile world. Children in the estimation of the Greeks and Romans fell far below that of the Jews. They were merely regarded from a utilitarian standpoint. They were necessary to keep up the population and supply soldiers in case of wars, Children were a State rather than a private concern. The love of children for their own sake was not general. They were considered burdensome to their parents, and went many times neglected. The cost of living was met by the reduction of the size of the family. Domestic ties were lax, and children were few.

While among the Jews child murder was forbidden with punishment by death, with the Greeks and Romans it was a matter of discretion. Means of abortion were in every-day use among the higher as well as among the lower classes. In the higher classes the motives for abortion were sensuality, desire for indulgence, and avoidance of pain. No law in Greece or Rome condemned it. Plato and Aristotle recommended it.[1]

Social problems in the Gentile churches. Since most of the social problems arose at Corinth, let us here get a view of conditions as they existed there. Pfleiderer adequately sums up the social and religious conditions of the early church. There was unbounded enthusiasm. Absolute freedom of speech prevailed and every one contributed to the edification of the congregation according to the gift with which the spirit had graced him. One intoned a hymn or psalm, another poured forth an instructive address relating to the Old Testament or to some traditional saying of Jesus. Another, inspired to prophecy, would proclaim the revelation which had come to him concerning the secrets of God's plans, the affairs of the future, or the soul of man. And while such an one was speaking, another would feel himself compelled to utter his revelation, another would speak with tongues, launching forth a torrent of incomprehensible words and sounds in his ecstacy. A stranger passing by might get the impression that he was mad. Women crowded forth to pray and prophecy, emphasizing their Christian freedom by throwing off their veils which custom demanded. Thus the meetings were so tumultous that

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1. Angus, S., Environment of early Christianity, p. 47

the freedom threatened to degenerate into disorder. There were disorders at the communion celebration. Some wanted to participate in the heathen sacrificial meals, while others objected to such. There were certain weak members who for reason of religious scruples abstained from meat and wine, holding them to be unclean. In the realm of sex there was a contrast of riotous freedom, basing their conduct on the apostle's doctrine of freedom, and ascetic unfreedom. There was also the fanatical radicalism which was inclined to reject all existing social orders. There was the problem of slavery and the tendency to world abnegation, and the problem of marriage.[1]

Paul and the Gentiles. Saint Paul considered himself to have been ordained by God to carry the message of Christ to the Gentiles. At the same time he realized that there was a great obstacle in his path--the "divine law" of the Jews. While many Gentiles would have embraced Christianity because of its wide appeal, its high standards of morality, and its belief in one God, they were nevertheless unwilling to become circumcised members of the Jewish faith.

Paul was anxious to work in harmony with the traditions of the Church. Yet he realized that there was no future for Christianity within the prescribed limits of Judaism. In spite of his desire to remain loyal to the Mother Church, in case of conflicting loyalties, such as loyalty to tradition and loyalty to his cause, Paul decides in favor of the latter.

Here we find Paul facing a social situation that forces him to decide whether his moral duty is to conform to a given

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1. Pfleiderer, op. cit., pp. 205ff.

code or meet the needs of a vital situation. What was this vital situation? Should the Gentiles be saved or should they be left to the mercies of paganism if they were not willing to become circumcised? Paul determines his decision by spiritual insight into the actual situation--the Gentiles must be saved!

As a result of the Apostle's conversion, he came to believe that this way of salvation was the way by which all men were to be saved. His religious experience as a Christian had taught him that there was something far more essential to a satisfying religious experience than the law. Although Paul could boast of the fact that he was irreproachable as a law observer, he realized that there was missing within him something very very necessary for a complete religious experience.

After Paul's break with the law he had to assign another motive as the basis of conduct. Heretofore it had been the law that kept men fit in the eyes of God. Now it is the spirit. Christ put an end to the law. It is his Spirit that produces love, peace, kindness, and self-control. Man did not achieve these qualities by the law nor through his own strength, but by the grace of God. He was not to live the ideal life because of the law, but because of conscience.

III

THE SOCIAL IDEALS OF PAUL

(1) Marriage. Dr. Andrews rightly states that there is no one ethical norm that Paul sets up in the problem of marriage. "He has one rule when both are Christians, another when one is Christian and the other pagan, and still another when the class of women known as virgins figure in the situation."[1] While she admits that Paul does the best that he can under the differing circumstances, and justifies his judgment by rationalization, it does not seem that the author above referred to goes quite far enough when she bases her conclusions on Paul's discourse in the seventh chapter of First Corinthians. While Dr. Andrews does mention Colossians 3:18ff., she does not discuss Paul's attitude as expressed in this discourse, nor is her conclusion, to any extent, based on this passage.

Miss Andrews concludes that Paul considers marriage as a prophylactic measure against immorality. Accordingly, he thinks celibacy the ideal state, marriage to be a hindrance to religious service, and he apparently has not the faintest notion of any social significance of marriage, or any satisfaction to be gained beyond the physical.[2] While this is the general impression to be gained from the seventh chapter of First Corinthians, it does not seem fair to Paul to overlook the passages in Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22-33, where he speaks of marriage in a most lofty manner, and conclude that the reference in First Corinthians is the correct view of the writer.

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1. Andrews, op. cit., p. 86
2. Ibid.

while the approach of the above authority is through the social situation, it is Paul's eschatology that is the real determining factor. in his answer in First Corinthians. Dr. Schweitzer in his works on Saint Paul very definitely points out how many of Paul's teachings were so affected.

Uppermost in Paul's mind in the case of First Corinthians is the approaching calamity--the end of the world is at hand. He learns from his experiences with the mixed marriages between Christians and heathens, and from the case of one member of a pagan marriage becoming converted, while the other remains heathen, that marriage can indeed be a worldly care. The marriage situation at Corinth has no doubt caused Paul far more anxiety than is shown in his letters. He has seen marriages in Corinth become a stumbling block to many. And with the end near at hand, he feels that men should not take on further hindrances to the cause; that they should remain free to live the life that will keep them ready for the coming kingdom. It is likely that Paul compared his own unmarried state with theirs and realized even more fully how great a burden a family would have been to him. He had no doubt seen many times the duty of the wife to her pagan husband interfere with her duties to the Christian life. One may easily see how a pagan husband might interfere with a Christian wife's duties to her church. He might even persuade her to attend pagan feasts and eat meat that had been consecrated to a pagan god. All this and more was no doubt in the mind of Paul when he wrote his letter to to the church at Corinth.

In his letters to the Colossians and Ephesians, Paul is found facing an entirely different situation. He is not here answering the question whether men should or should not marry, but is outlining the proper relationship of those already married, in order that they might make the best of the marital situation. Here Paul is faced with the need of offering counsel in the defense of the household, rather than in the defense of one's right to be free to do his Christian duty. He sees here the need of making the marriage relationship one of religious duty. By placing it on a religious footing there need not be any hindrance on the part of one party by the other. Whether this is the case or not, Paul did realize the importance of safeguarding the home against the moral and social upheavals that were prevalent in his churches.

As a result of admitting converts from the Gentile world who were still in the midst of a pagan environment, Paul finds it necessary to deal with problems of all phases of domestic life. Realizing that the family was the fundamental social unit, and the foundation of the Church, he found it very vital to lift the family from its former status to one that is in keeping with the high ideals of Christianity.

Paul elevates the marriage relationship to a new level. He frees it from the old Jewish idea in which all the rights were the husband's and all the duties were the wife's. The law which is to govern the Christian home is no longer the one-sided law, but the law of mutual relationship. The duties of the husband and wife are reciprocal. Just as the husband has

his rights, so also has he his duties. Likewise as the wife has her duties, she also has her rights. The husband is not only to think of his wife's duties to him, but his obligations to his wife.

While Paul advises the wife to be subject to her husband, he also instructs the husband to love his wife and not to treat her harshly.(Colossians 3:18-19)

In Ephesians 5:22-33 Paul likens the relationship of the husband and wife unto that of Christ and His Church, which must be in his mind, the highest type of human relationship. The relation of Christ to the Church calls for the submission of the latter, arising from the perfect union and sympathy. There should be willing submission of the wife to her husband. He bids husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.(5:25) A bond between Christ and the Church was made the pattern for the wife's duty. So it is also for the husband. "The authority which Paul claims for the husband is one that rests on love and sacrifice, and which indeed has no other basis."[1] In the ideal marriage the will of the wife is in perfect harmony with that of the husband.

(2) Divorce. It is the view of most scholars that Paul forbids divorce under any circumstances, basing their conclusions on First Corinthians 7:10, where it is said that a woman is not to separate from her husband, and if so, is to remain single or be reconciled to her husband. Lake holds that the reference here is not concerning a marital union which is a failure, but is

1. Moffatt, J., New Testament commentary(Colossians), p. 239
2. Ibid., p. 238

rejecting the idea that married converts should leave each other.[1] When one reads verses 1-10 it does appear that Paul is speaking to converts who are disturbed over the married state; thinking that it might be a sin. It would seem that he is instructing those in their respective states--married, unmarried, or widows--and telling them what is best. It seems here that what Paul is trying to get over is the fact that since the world is soon to end, it is better for those who are not married to remain in the single state. But those who are married are not to break their ties under any conditions, simply because celibacy is freer from worldly care and hence the more ideal state. There were sone converts who somehow got the idea that virginity was the only virtuous life. The problem here was what married converts should do. "Divorce seemed the obvious answer, but Paul's Jewish sense of the importance of the family and the validity of marriage made him reject this answer."[2]

(3) Children. When the status of children in the Gentile world is viewed, it can be immediately realized that Paul saw the situation as a very grave one. In his letters he finds space to deal with the relations that should exist between parents and their children. In his letter to the Colossians, he instructs the children to obey their parents at every point, "for this pleases the Lord." He in turn commands fathers to avoid irritating their children lest they become dispirited. Paul here, as in the case wives and husbands, makes the family relationship a reciprocal one. The child becomes a personality.

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1. Lake, K., Paul, p. 137
2. Ibid.

To Paul he is more than a subject or property of his parents. The child has human rights just as anyone else. The father is admonished to rule firmly but gently, without nagging and fault-finding. By beginning with the father and mother, he goes throughout the household, outlining the rights and duties of all. The status of the whole family is thus raised. The children as well as the mother are emancipated from the old idea of being just a necessary evil.

(4) The marriage of virgins. This type of marriage should be considered as a situation separate and distinct from that on which the traditional family is based. During the early days of Christianity, spiritual marriages were quite common. In this case the man and woman involved had taken the vows of continency and earnestly desired to keep them. There is much evidence that this practice was quite widespread. At the time of Cyprian virgins who were dedicated to God lived in the most intimate relationship with confessors, priests and laymen (Epist. 4:13,14); and Tertulian advises well-to-do Christians to take into their houses one or more widows as spiritual spouses, "who were beautiful by their faith, endowed with their poverty, and sealed by their age."[1] It was well pleasing to God to have several such wives. Marcionite Apelles had two spiritual wives, one of whom was the prophetess Philumene.[2]

With so much evidence of spiritual marriages and with the fact that the word 'daughter'in First Corinthians 7:36 does not appear in the Greek manuscript, it is only reasonable to believe

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1. Hastings, Encyclopedia of religion and ethics, p. 177
2. Ibid.

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1. Hastings, Encyclopedia of religion and ethics, p. 177
2. Ibid.

that Paul had reference to just this kind of marriage. "But if any man thinketh that he behaveth himself unseemly toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. But he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power as touching his own will, and hath determined this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin(daughter)shall do well. So then he that giveth his own virgin(daughter)in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not in marriage shall do better. (verses 36-38) Verse 37, "But he that standeth steadfast..." certainly does not read as though it had reference to a father concerning his daughter. It seems that the power of self-control and restraint suggested by this verse would concern a party whose relationship was different from that of a father.

Howard in his discussion of these passages thinks that they have reference to spiritual marriages. Verse 36 implies that after this vow of continency has been taken and the party or parties find that the physical desire is too great to continue in this state, then "let them marry" and it is no sin, but an honorable deed. But if the party or parties find that they have enough self-control to continue this state of continency then it is also honorable and even better; as the physical marriage is worldly and Paul wishes that they "may attend upon the Lord without distraction."(verse 35)[1]

(5) The weaker brother. In the community, there were some Christian converts who attended the pagan festivals and partook

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1. Abingdon's, op. cit., p. 1181

of their meats that had been consecrated to the pagan gods. While many Christians took no though of such there were the 'weak' Christians whose troubled consciences did not permit them to partake of the meats freely. While Paul says that the 'strong' member's knowledge told him that there was only one God and an idol counted for naught, he should take care that through his knowledge the weak brother should perish. While the 'strong' may eat meat and maintain his equilibrium, the weaker brother would lose his moral balance, and while it is the 'strong' brother's liberty to eat if he chooses, love should restrain him from letting his liberty prove a stumbling block to his weaker brother. To sin against a brother, wounding his weak conscience, is also to sin against Christ who died for him. "Wherefore if meat causeth my brother to stumble I will eat no flesh for ever more, that I cause not my brother to stumble." (I Corinthians 8:13)

In the tenth chapter of First Corinthians, verses 24ff. Paul charges his converts notto seek his own, but his neighbor's good. They are charged to act for the sake of others and to seek not one's own profit, but the profit of the many that they may be saved.

(6) Human slavery. Ancient society, it was thought, depended upon slavery as a foundation. To abolish slavery, society, it was held, would have thrown into a state of chaos. The Greeks and Romans saw no more wrong in having slaves than do the people of our own day see in having domestic servants.

As a result of wars, piracy, and kidnapping, the number of slaves is estimated to have been nearly one-half of the entire population. From a moral as well as an economic point of view, slavery was a source of untold evil. Society never recovered from the marks left on it by the servile institution.

Saint Paul's doctrine of freedom and equality and the preaching of the gospel that proclaimed liberty to the captive, made the problem of slavery rather acute. The question of his attitude toward slave and master is still, however, a debatable one. While Paul has been severely criticized by some for not openly condemning slavery, Scott says that in "the attitude that Paul took toward slavery in(his letters to Philemon and the Colossians)he did more to abolish slavery than any other man. He placed the relation of slave and master on a new footing, and as these new principles gradually sank into the Christian conscience, the institution of slavery became more and more indefensible, and finally disappeared of its own accord."[1]

Professor Enslin concludes that Paul took slavery as a matter of course and neither hinted at abolition nor approved it. "While slavery as an institution was never attacked by Paul, nevertheless, the note he struck so incessantly of the union of believer with believer, could hardly fail to cause its ultimate downfall. Christianity's appeal was one based on love, rather than on philosophy or the dictates of reason, and this appeal was effective."[2]

1. Scott, E. F. Literature of the New Testament, pp. 177-178
2. Enslin, op. cit., pp. 206, 210

The question is often asked, why Paul sent Onesimus back, instructing him to be obedient. Some hold that he instructed slaves to be obedient because he felt that obedience, honesty, and trustworthiness, were virtues in themselves, whether practiced by slave or master. In exhorting slaves to content themselves wherever they are, Paul does not mean to imply that slavery is good. Knowing as he knew, the moral horrors, the infamous atrocities to which slaves were exposed, and the helpless victims that they were of their masters' cruelties, as well as of their lusts, it is hard to believe that Paul could have endorsed slavery.

Various discussions, with many points of view, have grown out of Paul's letter to Philemon, and the more one reads the more confused he usually becomes. There is one thing certain, Paul is usually tactful, and in the case of slavery, he was extremely so. One will only have to get a glimpse of the tact that he exhibited in this letter to realize just how acute this problem must have been. Here Paul is writing to a close friend and Christian brother; still he is extremely careful in what he has to say. Could not Paul speak frankly as long as he spoke advisedly? We may either agree with Enslin and conclude that Paul took slavery as a matter of course, or we can rest assured that he realized his helplessness in a situation that was part and parcel of society itself. On a question so acute as slavery he dare not denounce it openly even to a friend, lest another hear about it and accuse him of undermining the institution.

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we might look at the letter from another angle and see how Paul was dealing with an immediate social situation. Onesimus has, in the eyes of his master, committed the gravest of offenses, and since Paul realizes that he is helpless, so far as changing society and abolishing slavery is concerned, he does write a letter to the owner of the slave with the hope of warding off the punishment that might otherwise be forthcoming. On the basis of this new relationship, Paul hoped at least to do away with some of the evils of slavery.

(7) Man's relation to the State. Nowhere in Paul's letters do we find him in open opposition to the Roman Government. In his letter to the Romans, he speaks rather favorably of government. Just what is it that prompts Paul to give such advice here? Can we say that it is because he is a Roman citizen, and is naturally loyal to his country? Although he is a Roman citizen, which proved of great advantage in protecting him in various conflicts, it can hardly be said that this alone prompted his attitude. While there were many things in Paul's favor, such as having been rescued from the Jewish mob by Roman soldiers, and the protection that the Government gave to Christians against Jewish persecution, there were other things that were not so favorable. Many times Paul suffered arrest at the hands of Roman officials and for the most part one could think that he saw the Government fom many angles as evil.

In the letter to the Romans Paul writes, "Let every soul be in subjection to higher powers, for there is no power but of

God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive themselves judgment... Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath but also for conscience sake. For this cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."(13:1-2,5-7)

Here Saint Paul admonishes the Christians to obey political superiors as divine governments, which God had instituted for the protection of the good and the punishment of the wicked. He should honor, obey, respect, pay taxes, and be a peaceful citizen. He should be subject, not through fear, but for the sake of conscience.

Although it is not to be doubted that the Roman Government had a very definite function in the mind of Paul, one might term it as a necessary evil against Jewish persecution and lawlessness. These exhortations in behalf of the empire are not by any means a result of Paul's personal good will or appreciation for it. While there may be many determining factors, we can almost feel certain that circumstances were the prompting motives. Only a survey of the social situation as it affected the State and alien subjects is necessary to discover the underlying motive. Whenever Paul writes at length on a subject, there is usually a very definite reason for it, social conditions demand it.

A glimpse into the first century history will reveal the strongly anti-Roman feeling that existed among the Jews. It is certain that some, if not much, of this feeling found its way into the early Christian Church with Jewish Christians. With this feeling of resentment running high, and a corresponding feeling of suspicion on the part of the Roman officials toward the Christians, or any fraternal sect for that matter, Paul realized just what danger could ensue.

Paul knew that an attitude of open resentment on the part of Christians would have precipitated a conflict in which they had everything to lose. He knew that it was vitally necessary for the Christians to exhibit an attitude that would not arouse the suspicion of constituted authority to the belief that the new religion was undermining the fabric of society.

Even more Paul realized the importance of the Christians, situated as they were in the capital itself, avoiding all appearances of disloyalty. The slightest offense here would mean a death blow to the infant Church. It is in view of this situation that Paul sets forth his exhortation of obedience to the Government. "By scrupulous submission to the divinely appointed secular powers they might divest their religion of its suspicious political appearance and carry out their mission under the favorable conditions afforded them by the Roman Government."[1]

When Paul's numerous conflicts with Roman authority are noted, considerable doubt may be expressed concerning his statement that that authority is divinely appointed. But for Paul,

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1. Peake, A. S., A commentary on the Bible, p. 774

in spite of the fact that he saw its many evils, it had a very definite purpose. It could be divinely appointed if its only divine or useful purpose was for the protection of Christians against Jewish persecutions. The Roman power was a measure against lawlessness and many other things that would serve as menaces to society, although in many instances the Roman tax-gatherers proved to be a menace in many respects.

While it may be questioned whether Paul spoke what he actually believed himself, it is not to be doubted that he stated what he believed to be expedient.

When the great amount of suffering on the part of Christians after Paul's time is noted, it may be considered certain that such common sense and good advice which he exhibited and offered, were responsible for delaying for the time being the wholesale persecutions that were in a later period to threaten seriously the life of the infant Church.

While the religious demands made by Rome on alien subjects were in the eyes of the average man exceedingly light, in the eyes of Jews and Christians, who considered a prayer of good-will for the empire, and a recognition of the divine destiny of Rome, by means of a gift of incense to the sacred city, they were impossible infamy and a worship of devils.[1] Even here Peake thinks that a genuinely loyal Jew or Christian might have been frankly able to say "we have all goodwill to the Roman world, but our religion forbids us this particular way of showing it", and a reasonable magistrate might well have met them half-way.[2] In such a case Paul would have been found

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1. Peake, op. cit., p. 631
2. Ibid.

violating neither the law of conscience nor the law of expediency.

(8) War and peace. As Paul's teachings were limited to the Church, he was not concerned with expounding his views on such national problems as war and peace in his letters. It is for this reason, no doubt, that we have no direct treatment from him concerning such.

While Paul does not deal with the problems of war and peace as such, we do find him constantly preaching peace and harmony to his converts. In Romans 12:17-21, he charges his converts to "Recompense to no man evil for evil(18b), "live peacefully with all men"(19). "Avenge not yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." Here Paul very definitely stresses the importance of the non-resistance of evil, and peaceful living.

In Ephesians 6:11ff. Paul reminds his Churches of the spiritual war that they must wage against sin.(12) For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

The fact that Saint Paul uses such terms as "armor of God", "gird your loins with truth", the helmet of salvation", and the "shield of faith" shows that he was familiar with physical wars to the extent of knowing the various weapons employed in such.

It might seem strange that Paul was so close to the subject of physical warfare and yet does not in the slightest degree speak out against it. It is no doubt for the same reason that he does not condemn any earthly order or disorder, save among his converts. The world is soon to end and, and this will result in end of all wars. This Paul himself cannot do, hence he feels that it is his task to engage, not in war with flesh and blood, nor waste time condemning it, but to wage a spiritual war against sin in order to keep men fit to enter into the spiritual kingdom when it does come.

(9) Economic problems. Saint Paul, in his letters does not denounce the acquisition of wealth, and we have no way of ascertaining his attitude toward the wealthy class. So far as the question of wealth is concerned, he says little or nothing. Of course, it is always to be remembered that Paul usually dealt with immediate problems, and wealth, no doubt, was not a problem in his church.

While the Apostle does not deal with the question of wealth, he does demand that every man should work for and earn his own bread.(II Thessalonians 3:10ff.) "For we hear of some that walk among you disorderly, that work not at all, but are busybodies". (11) "Now them that are such we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."(12) "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat."(10) In I Thessalonians 4:11-12, converts are exhorted to "study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your hands, even

as we charged you; that ye may walk becomingly toward them that are without, and may have need of nothing." Paul not only bade his converts to work, but he worked himself.

Saint Paul emphatically rejected the communistic fanaticism related to the early Christian tendency to world abnegation. "He was opposed consistently to the under estimation of labor and property and the over estimation of poverty and charity. Paul was so far removed from the ideal of common property maintained by the missionary congregation at Jerusalem that his epistles throughout presuppose private property acquired in business, and regard business, not only as permitted, but required as a means toward honorable independence of personality and charitable assistance to the needy."[1]

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1. Pfleiderer, op. cit., p. 211

IV

LIMITATIONS OF PAUL'S SOCIAL TEACHINGS

There are many problems that vitally concern us today for which we find no direct teachings in the epistles of Paul. There are reasons for this, however. In the first place, Paul realized the futility of a "handful of converts," who had absolutely no voice in government, trying to change the existing social order; secondly, he believed that the world was soon to be at an end when all evil would be done away; and thirdly, it took all of his time and energy to keep his converts spiritually fit to be ready for the new order of things.

While Paul has been criticized by many for charging people to be content in whatever station of life they found themselves, it should always be borne in mind that such teachings were very definitely colored by his eschatology. He was only trying to stress the unimportance of the earthly state, whether high or low, as all things would soon be changed.

There are also many problems that Paul dealt with that are of little concern to us today--for instance, whether women should be veiled in public meetings, and the eating of meat that had been consecrated to heathen gods. While these two problems do not concern us in the least, the principles which Paul sets forth in their solution are of lasting value.

In the case of the veiling of women in public, Paul was concerned not so much with the veiling or unveiling as such, as he was that women did not conduct themselves in such manner as to misrepresent themselves as well as the Christian religion. With reference to meat that had been offered to idols, it was

not the eating of the meat, for the 'strong' who ate it knew that an idol was nothing, but it was for the consideration of the 'weak' brother that concerned Paul. Practices that were morally harmless to one should not be allowed to cause another to lose his moral balance. Paul taught self-restraint for the sake of others--consideration for the 'weaker' brother.

While there may be many important social problems for us today that Paul left untouched or unsolved, the time, the place, the social conditions under which Paul lived, and last, but not least, his eschatology, must be kept constantly in mind in studying his social discourses. Living in the age in which the great Apostle lived, when a new religion was looked upon with suspicion by the ruling powers; one would not be so quick to put his thoughts into written form concerning the existing social order which was upheld by the ruling powers. Paul undoubtedly conversed with his congregations about many things that he dared not put on parchment.

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